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Sargent, Frederick Leroy

The national flower movement

Boston

1899

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NATIONAL FLOWER MOVEMENT

BY

FREDERICK LEROY SARGENT

PRESIDENT OF THE COLUMBINE ASSOCIATION, CAMBRIDGE

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THE NATIONAL FLOWER MOVEMENT.

Mr. President and Ladies and Gentlemen:

During the fortunate years of peace that have thus far blessed the second century of our national independence, we have seen develop throughout the United States a popular movement which is surely unique in the history of the world. This is the movement to bring about the adoption of a national flower. Here is a matter of pure sentiment seeking legislative recognition; a question of taste, if you will, leading to widespread organized efforts, to the formation of national societies, and to the calling of a national convention. Among the many interesting manifestations of American feeling which have characterized the close of the nineteenth century surely this unprecedented outcome is not the least worthy of our attention.

The desire for a national flower — now so widely felt among the best people of our country — springs mainly from two sentiments which all of us would cherish. These are the love of our native flowers and the love of our native land. To confirm the feeling that these sentiments are closely akin we need hardly be reminded that the floral emblems of other nations have played an important part in their history. For us a fitting national flower would bring to the service of patriotism an emblem whereby our love for the fatherland would find expression through one of its fairest products. If our people shall ever come to enjoy the benefits of such an emblem surely every true American must rejoice.

It cannot be claimed that the efforts which have been made to this end have always been wise. In fact, as we shall see, they have often been of the sort which adds to the griefs of the judicious. Nevertheless we cannot fail to find much that is helpful to the general movement in every earnest effort to be of service in this matter, and the helpfulness will be quite apart from the apparent achievement. However mistaken or ill-directed we may

choose to consider the efforts which are opposed to our own, we may be sure they have all something to teach us and not a little for us to admire.

So far as I have been able to learn, the first candidate to be publicly suggested for our floral emblem was the mayflower, or trailing arbutus (*Epigæa repens*). The idea, I believe, came originally from a lady in Pennsylvania, Miss Margaret B. Harvey, who made it the theme of a poem, which she wrote while living near the site of General Washington's camp at Valley Forge. This poem was entitled "The National Flower, or Valley Forge Arbutus," and was published in March, 1887. Other poems inspired by the charming qualities of this modest little flower have appeared from time to time.

The principal reasons which have been advanced for adopting it as our national floral emblem are these: It was one of the first blossoms seen by the Pilgrims at Plymouth after landing from the "Mayflower," and by Washington's army after their winter at Valley Forge. Its flowers suggest five-pointed stars, and its leaves are laurel-like. It grows wild in the thirteen original States, and displays an independence of spirit by defying cultivation.

Unfortunately, these alleged qualifications depend, for the most part, upon features that should entirely disqualify any candidate. Thus, its early blooming, which with us makes it a flower of April rather than of May, renders the blossoms unavailable for decoration on any national holiday — that is to say, when we should most wish to use them. Moreover, not only is the plant unknown in the wild state over three-quarters of our territory, but to those of our fellow Americans who dwell in that vast region it must remain unknown even in cultivation.

These facts are perhaps sufficient to show that the trailing arbutus is quite undesirable for our national flower, no matter what historical associations it may possess. But these very associations are most unfortunate. For this flower has been recognized for several generations as the floral emblem of Nova Scotia. As such it has appeared on coins and postage stamps of that province; it has been used in important ways in their historical celebrations; and on certain flags widely used by the Nova Scotians it occurs as a device accompanied by the motto, "We bloom amid the snows." The Nova Scotians are certainly to be congratulated upon having a floral emblem so admirably fitted for their purposes. With regard to those Americans who have wished us to take this emblem for our own it is but charitable to suppose that they have done so largely in ignorance of Nova Scotia's claim. We know that many who at first wished us to have the mayflower have now abandoned the idea. As to those who still cling to it, let us hope that their ideal of patriotism and national honor is not, as it would seem to be, disregardful of the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," or of that which says, "Thou shalt not covet . . . anything that is thy neighbor's."

In many ways a more happy suggestion was that of the golden-rod (Solidago). I am informed by Miss Harvey that this idea was published first in the Boston "Globe," in May, 1888. The fact that golden-rod grows wild in such profusion almost everywhere in the United States, and is such a brilliant adornment of the roadside, made it at once a very popular candidate. Its generous wealth and aspiring air of freedom soon found appropriate expression in verse. To some the composite nature of its ample clusters exemplified our motto, "*E pluribus unum.*" To others the golden color of the blossom seemed a fitting symbol of the gold standard which they upheld during our recent presidential campaign.

In 1889 a booklet, containing chromolithographs of the golden-rod and the mayflower, was issued by Messrs. L. Prang & Co., with a view to testing public opinion on the national flower question. Copies of the booklet were sent to a number of prominent persons, with the request that they tell what flower they would prefer for the floral emblem of the nation. Of the replies received, a large majority were in favor of the golden-rod. Not long after, a canvass of votes among school children, chiefly in New York State, showed a similar preference for the same flower. It was doubtless because of the enthusiasm then shown that the New York "Recorder" in 1895 issued a colored picture of a bunch of golden-rod, tied with a red, white, and blue ribbon, and labelled "The National Favorite."

For a while it looked as if all this enthusiasm would carry the day for the golden-rod. But a growing dissatisfaction was yet to be reckoned with — a dissatisfaction which continually increased among those who first welcomed the golden-rod as a candidate.

Such a revulsion was sure to come as soon as the golden-rod advocates attempted to use their flower for decorative or other purposes. They could not decorate with it on Memorial Day or on

the Fourth of July, because it does not reach its prime until August or September. Even when it was in bloom they found it unsuited for indoor use. Its color, upon which they so much depended, was found to be dingy and unattractive when away from the strong light of the sun.

Its use indoors, moreover, met with vigorous protest in the interest of health, for physicians maintain that the emanations of this plant frequently produce asthma and are an exciting cause of hay fever or autumnal catarrh. Farmers either despise it as the "yaller weed," or hate it because of its dark record of injury to cattle, while, according to a recent announcement, the State Veterinarian of Wisconsin considers it to be the cause of a disease resembling consumption which has been killing thousands of horses.

The efforts to use representations of the golden-rod for decorative purposes have been scarcely more successful than the attempts to use the flower itself. When it has been impossible for the artist to indicate the color (as must often be the case in decorative design) he has felt it necessary to add a label conveying the information, "This is a golden-rod."

While practical considerations turned many people against the idea of making the golden-rod a national emblem, many others, with whom sentiment was paramount, soon came to see that arrogant aggression, cheap display, the false liberty which is unmindful of the rights of others, were characteristics which would make this plant a deplorable symbol for the American people.

As the Columbian celebrations approached the desire for a national flower grew apace and stimulated the efforts of many people in various parts of the country to bring about the adoption of some fitting floral representative. The most noteworthy of these attempts were in connection with the pansy (*Viola tricolor*) and the Indian corn (*Zea Mays*).

In comparison with the golden-rod the pansy, as will be seen, has the decided advantages of variety of color and simplicity and distinctiveness of form, combined with entire harmlessness. But on the other hand it lacks the necessary qualification of being a native flower, and is entirely without associations that would connect it with our country rather than with any other.

The suggestion of this flower, and the organization of the Pansy Society of America, is to be attributed, I believe, to Mr. Albert C. Hopkins, of Nashua, Ia. What has been published regarding the society would indicate that its efforts were chiefly among children in schools. At this distance from the scene of its activities it is difficult to form any just idea of the extent of its influence. It must be said, however, that its power, in 1892, was sufficient to induce the Hon. Walt H. Butler, Representative from Iowa, to introduce into Congress two bills embodying the views of the society. The first of these provides, in Section I, "That on and after the first day of May, A.D. 1893, the official and recognized floral emblem of the United States of America shall be the flower commonly known as the pansy; named also garden violet, hearts-ease, and so forth." Section II requires, "That the national sentiment expressed in connection with this emblem shall be justice, liberty, union, culture, and peace; and that the last three words — union, culture, and peace — shall constitute the motto;" and Section III, "That the inauguration of this emblem shall be duly and fittingly celebrated on the first day of May, A.D. 1893, in connection with the opening of the World's Columbian Exposition." The other bill is intended "to make more definite, uniform, and symbolic the flag of the United States." The main provisions of this bill are first, that the union or blue field of the flag "shall hold the outline of a white pansy with a true pansy centre, which shall represent the capitol or central government; that the white stars, representing the States, shall be set inside the white outline of the pansy in a manner to produce the general effect at a distance of a white pansy in a blue sky." The second and last section provides, "that the staff of the flag shall be made to represent a sleeping American rattlesnake, head downward, with an acorn in place of the head, and a white pansy bud in place of rattles, the whole symbolizing defence, courage, wisdom, strength, peace, and immortality."

Lest you should think me taking liberties with your credulity, let me hasten to assure you that I am quoting verbatim the essential features of these bills. Imagine for a moment an acorn-headed pansy-tailed rattlesnake stiffened into a flagstaff, and bearing aloft as the banner of our country this travesty of the stars and stripes, proclaiming to the world an alien flower as Columbia's emblem! Surely when this extraordinary combination was conceived western wit was wool gathering. It is perhaps needless to say that this attempt to manufacture sentiment by act of Congress did not meet with popular approval.

In the advocacy of Indian Corn a hearty American feeling expressed itself in terms of genuine culture. One of the first notes to be sounded in its praise was a stirring poem by Edna Dean Proctor, entitled "Columbia's Emblem," which appeared in the "Century Magazine" for September, 1892. In 1893 the June number of the "Arena" had a symposium of eminent persons on "Maize as the National Flower," and in the same year appeared a little volume of "Tributes in Verse and Prose," entitled "Columbia's Emblem, Indian Corn." This collection included, besides the poem already mentioned, other poetic selections appreciative of the worth and beauty of maize, extracts from American historians showing its importance in our national development, accounts of its ceremonial use by the red men, and illustrations of attempts to use it in architectural ornament.

Since the Columbian year the fortunes of this candidate for the national flower have sadly declined. While the advocates of maize had said many interesting things about their favorite, and in a most charming way, these proved to be very little to the point. The cordial words of welcome which at first greeted their suggestion in so many quarters were soon followed by words of vigorous protest backed by fundamental objections. To these no satisfactory answer has been forthcoming, and the significant chill of silence which has followed so quickly upon the first glow of enthusiasm has been made scarcely less depressing by the occasional confessions of some more or less distinguished persons that the objections aforesaid have had no weight with them. To the credit of others, among whom are included some of the most prominent of the original advocates of maize, be it said that they have recently expressed themselves as having entirely abandoned the idea of trying to make this plant our national flower.

How shall we explain the fact that a candidate which was introduced to the public under such favorable auspices, and vouched for by such distinguished leaders of public opinion, should prove so disappointing? My answer is that those who fondly expected the public to accept Indian corn as a national flower simply reckoned without their host. In the first place, we of the people are so constituted that not even with the imaginative help of the poet can we recognize in a maize plant what we mean by a flower. Though horticulturists have developed some ornamental varieties of maize, they class them as foliage plants and not as garden flowers.

If a botanist insists that it has what he calls flowers we have to remind him that in this case, then, what he calls flowers are wrapped in husks. For the purpose of decoration there might as well be no flowers at all. To us it neither has what looks like a flower nor could we without making ridiculous pretence ever manage to use the plant as a floral emblem. In the second place, it has come to our knowledge that maize is not really a native of our country.[1] While we admire many foreign plants, and are glad to profit by them in various ways, we reserve a special affection for the plants belonging peculiarly to our native land, and this affection we wish to bestow upon our floral emblem. We insist that our national flower shall belong to our national flora. A national flower which is not a flower and is not national is not the sort of a national flower that the people desire. Moreover, the adoption of this plant would not only deny us what we seek, but would force upon our minds associations antagonistic to the feelings which a national emblem is meant to inspire. This would result from the many prosaic uses of corn, which, because of their very importance, suggest our most frequent and therefore most potent thoughts regarding it. When the average man begins to realize that he is expected to be uplifted by corn-fed thoughts of country the idea is pretty sure to be greeted with a grin. Yes, the saving sanity of American humor may be trusted to keep us from mixing our patriotism with our porridge.

Before endeavoring to trace the further development of the national flower movement let us pause for a moment to review the situation presented in 1892, the Columbian year. Four noteworthy attempts had been made to satisfy the growing desire among our fellow countrymen for a floral emblem which might fitly represent the United States among the nations, and meet the requirements of national celebrations such as the one nearly at hand. Each of these attempts had failed to secure popular approval. Yet these suggestions, and the efforts directly connected with them, were the best results which the national flower movement had to show up to the time of the Columbian year.

At first sight the situation as described may not seem to have afforded a very promising outlook. Yet I believe it can be shown

[1] All recent authorities agree that maize is not indigenous outside of Central and South America. See Gray's "Field, Forest, and Garden Botany," revised by L. H. Bailey, 1895, p. 468; Harshberger, J. W., "Maize," Contr. Bot. Lab. Univ. Penn., 1893, I, 2, p. 151; DeCandolle, A., "Origin of Cultivated Plants," p. 387 *et seq.*

that, in reality, important progress had been made toward fully satisfying the desire for a worthy national flower. A few words will show what I mean.

The problem presented to our people has been an entirely new one. Other nations, it is true, have come to have their floral emblems, but each of these was, as it were, plucked in the childhood of the nation, snatched up as an unconsidered trifle by the way, and worn near the nation's heart while it braved the road of national progress; till, in later days, the little flower became a precious memento of the journey.

The same experience is not for us. Our nation was born with the marks of age upon it. It had no childhood. Its mission was to seek in this new world the fountain of eternal youth, which has not yet been found.

There are many tokens of the road which leads to these pleasant waters, and one is a certain flower which makes the heart feel young and inspires the noblest yearnings of youth. We may not find this flower except by careful search, nor may we know it except it meet in us an answering wish. Therefore, when we hear one say, "Behold! It is the mayflower," and another, "Nay, but the golden-rod," and a third, "The pansy is the one," and yet another, "We have found it in the maize," let us be glad, for this tells us that the *search* is well begun. Let us rejoice even more to hear still others say, "None of these can be the flower; our search is not yet ended," for this gives hope that the true desire, the touchstone of success, has really come.

My parable, I hope, will interpret to you, moreover, the significance of the next stage in the progress of this extraordinary popular movement. The search for the true flower, once started, aroused in every section of the country a spirit of childlike enthusiasm which led to many supposed discoveries.

I shall not be expected, I hope, to dwell with impartial inclusiveness upon all the suggestions which issued from this Columbian frolic amid the flowers. Many of them are now forgotten, and excited but little interest at the time.

Our present purpose will be served by calling attention to a few specimens which illustrate the most significant types. As will be seen, the lessons taught by the preceding failures had not yet been learned. Certain persons who did not know or did not care that their candidates were the chosen emblems of other nations proposed that we should adopt the rose of England, the clover, recognized as the shamrock of Ireland, the chrysanthemum of Japan, or the lily, which has been so prominently associated with the history of France. Others who still thought, apparently, that our people might be induced to adopt a foreign flower not native to this country, advocated the pink, the pampas plume, and the cosmos. Of the last mentioned candidate one of the newspapers remarked: "Its only claim to nationality is that it was introduced into this country a few years ago from Mexico, by a German florist of Hoboken." The lingering fondness for a weed, even though a foreign one, expressed itself in the proposal to choose the ox-eye daisy, or whiteweed, which figured as the symbol of the silverites in the late presidential campaign. The poetic feeling that a floral emblem should somehow be good to eat found further expression in the suggestions to glorify the peanut and the potato, while a somewhat similar sentiment urged the grateful recognition of those comfort-bringing foreigners, King Cotton and Señor Tobacco.

To many good people it has seemed that the whole matter depended merely upon personal fondness, and, therefore, as a contribution to the question, they have told the public their favorite flower, it never occurring to them that fitness for national uses should be the first consideration.

Perhaps the most extraordinary suggestion of the time was that we have instead of a national flower a bouquet or garland composed of State flowers. There were those who welcomed the idea as a beautiful compromise, calculated to please everybody. But alas! the more people thought about it the less they liked the idea. It was asked, Supposing every State to have adopted its floral emblem, how could any one ever get together the forty-five flowers, in bloom at different times? If by some wizard's spell such an incongruous medley could be collected, what could be done with it, or how could it be represented in a small space? To this question no satisfactory reply has been made. But for the comfort of those who still see useful possibilities in the idea it should be pointed out that so far as the garland could be used at all it might supplement, but could never be a substitute for, a national flower.

None of these candidates aroused more than a fleeting interest. The pond lily, the larkspur, and our native asters and sunflowers, were somewhat more favored. Asters and sunflowers won support

from their wide dispersion and stellar or solar suggestion; but soon two fatal objections appeared. The first was their late blooming; the second, that their blossoms so nearly resembled those of the chrysanthemum of Japan that if used for national purposes in conventional design they would be indistinguishable from that foreign emblem, which to some we might even appear to be copying.

The larkspur was urged because of the red, white, and blue flowers of different sorts, but since there was little else to recommend it, and as in the wild state it was not very widely known, it was but little urged.

The pond lily at first recommended itself strongly by its exquisite form and fragrance and by its time of blooming; but its chances for national favor were nipped in the bud when people came to realize that its petals closed tightly in cloudy weather and at sundown, and that the famous lotus of the Egyptians (virtually their national flower) was a water lily closely similar to our own. It was in vain that one of its advocates pointed out the excellent example which the water lily set to the American people, by going so early to bed.

No little interest was aroused by the suggestions of those who sought to reinforce the growing interest in park-gardening, and the celebration of Arbor Day, by leading the popular desire for a national flower in the direction of some tree or shrub. The oak, the American elm, the magnolia, the tulip tree, the yucca, and the mountain laurel were the principal woody plants brought forward. There was not a little to be said in favor of some tree emblem, especially since Canada afforded us an encouraging example in having adopted the sugar maple. Nevertheless, although the recommendations came from high quarters, there proved to be insurmountable difficulties in the way of a wide popular acceptance of any such idea. Very few of our woody plants grow wild over the greater part of our territory. Nearly all belong to the East or the West, or grow well only in the Northern or the Southern States. The magnolia, the tulip tree, the yucca, and the mountain laurel, for example, are thus restricted in their distribution; the few trees like oaks, pines, and elms which have a wider range are unsuitable for the purposes of a floral emblem because they have no flowers possessing a decorative value. A further difficulty is that the cultivation of any tree or shrub would be scarcely possible to large

numbers of our people, who derive, however, much pleasure from raising herbaceous plants. Thus it happened that another group of disappointments came to swell the list already recorded.

Surely nothing could better show the invincible vitality of the popular desire for a national flower than its persistence in spite of all these deferments of hope. Those who thought that the movement had at last exhausted itself in more or less ridiculous futility were entirely mistaken. They might point by way of confirmation to the fact that interest in such matters was being largely directed to the choice of State flowers. But this interesting outcome of the national flower movement, instead of supplanting the original desire, in reality strengthened it, and at the same time afforded most helpful encouragement.

The problems connected with choosing a suitable State flower are much the same as those involved in a fitting choice for the Union. The main difference lies in the lesser difficulties which go with the smaller territory. It is but natural, therefore, that satisfactory solutions of the State problem should be first attained. Among the flowers which have already been adopted by legislative action as the floral emblems of their representative States the following may be mentioned: The moccasin flower, or lady's slipper, (*Cypripedium*) was chosen by the Minnesota Legislature in a resolution passed shortly before the opening of the Columbian Fair. The next year a bill was introduced into the Legislature of Montana naming the bitter root (*Lewisia rediviva*) for State flower. This bill was passed in 1895. The Columbine (doubtless *Aquilegia cærulea*) has been for some years the recognized floral emblem of Colorado. The matter is being more or less vigorously agitated in many of the other States.

In this work good service is being rendered by the National Floral Emblem Society of America through various local societies which are affiliated within it. The organization was begun at the time of the World's Fair in Chicago, and the headquarters are in that city. As expressed in its Constitution, the aim of the Society is to "obtain a genuine expression of the will of the people" which shall lead to the adoption of a national floral emblem and the selection of State flowers, so far as these have not already been chosen. It purposes through a somewhat elaborate system of appointments and committees to reach every part of the country. One of the best examples of a local branch is the Floral Emblem Society of

Massachusetts. This branch, under the able presidency of Mrs. Ellen A. Richardson, has for the past few years been affording opportunity for the advocates of various flowers to present their claims at its meetings. It has also striven to win for us a more rational and edifying celebration of the Fourth of July, and has devoted itself to various other patriotic and educational concerns.

Entirely independent, although in friendly relations with the Floral Emblem Society, is the Columbine Association, which today holds a leading place in the national flower movement. The fortunes of the Columbine Association since its beginning in 1895 have been so closely linked with the progress of the general movement that the history of the one is largely the history of the other. Yet what the Association is accomplishing has come through the concentration of its efforts upon the single aim "to bring about the final adoption of the Columbine as the national flower of the United States."

To trace the development of the columbine idea from its beginning we must go back to the Columbian year, when the search for a national flower was being pursued with keenest interest in view of the approaching celebrations. When every one's thoughts were so largely occupied with matters Columbian it was most natural that the columbine should occur to some of us as being a flower especially appropriate for Columbia's emblem. Once in mind, the idea was found to possess remarkable possibilities which have been unfolding ever since. It is significant that the idea came to several different persons quite independently, at about the same time. In the West, as we learn from recent information, this candidate was suggested by M. Sears Brooks in the Madison "Courier," of Madison, Ind., for Aug. 1, 1891. The principal arguments there advanced in its favor are as follows: "Whenever a flower has been adopted by any country it has been because of some symbolic meaning. Not merely that it was beautiful, but that in some way it represented some historic event or exhibited some characteristic quality. We have such a flower in the wild columbine. First, because it wears our national colors, red, white, and blue. Growing in every section of our country, its color at the South is more often blue; at the North it is white, while in this locality it is red with a golden interior, typical, it would seem, of the blood and treasure expended to secure the Ohio valley to an English-speaking people.

The name 'Columbine' is derived from the same Latin word as is the name of Columbus, the discoverer, and of Columbia, which our nation rightly bears.

"Botanically, the wild columbine belongs to the genus *Aquilegia*, whose name is derived from the Latin *Aquila*, or the eagle, ever regarded as the emblem of dignity and might, and adopted as our national emblem. From these facts we see established a symbolic claim for the wild columbine to which no other flower can pretend.

"In its typical character we see that it grows and thrives under the most adverse circumstances. It dances just as gayly upon the bare rock, with no visible sustenance save sun and air, as in the highly cultivated garden, its only change under culture being a multiplicity of trumpets, one within another, to sound the praises of a free and glorious country. It has all the delicate beauty and power of endurance belonging to American womanhood; all the courage and hardihood of America's noble sons. Even in decay there is no shabbiness; the trumpet-shaped petals fall singly, one by one, beautiful to the last, leaving the central shaft which they protected fruitful with seed for coming generations.

"Graceful in poise, under no circumstances becoming a noxious weed, wearing an air of prosperity as it swings its tiny bells from the crevices of bare rocks, what more can be said of any flower as the emblem of American Independence and Thrift?"

In the East the first public announcement of the idea, so far as I am aware, was by Isabella Carter Rhoades in a poem which appeared Jan. 16, 1893, in the Springfield "Republicau," under the title "The Columbine for Columbia." The words of the poem were written to go with our national air, "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." They are as follows:

"Emblazoned in panoply regal,
The rose and the lily may shine;
Aquilegia, akin to our eagle,
We claim thee, O wild columbine!
Through Commonwealths five and twice twenty
And States yet in embryo, too,
Scatter widely thy symbols of plenty,
Cornucopias red, white, and blue!

"Thou art red as the East flushed with glory,
Deep blue as the warm Southern skies,
Snowy white as the North's hilltops hoary,
In the West, like its own golden prize.

Ring airily out on the mountain,
Swing slowly thy bells on the plain,
By prairie and cañon and fountain
Elfin fingers wake Liberty's strain!

"Be our lives like thy leaflets well rounded,
Holding truth as their hearts hold the dew;
May our Union, for Liberty founded,
Nurture Justice and Purity too.
O country with future so glowing,
The nations still watch thee afar!
Portion wisely the plenty o'erflowing
From the horns that encircle the star!"

In the "Home Magazine" for March of the same year T. T. Swinburne is quoted by a writer on "The National Flower" as advocating the columbine for reasons similar to those suggested by its earlier champions. By a curious coincidence there appeared at the same time in the "Household" an article by the present writer, entitled "Our National Flower," in which substantially the same arguments, along with others, were set forth.

Finally Harlan H. Ballard, the President of the Agassiz Association, without being aware that the columbine had already been suggested for our national flower, wrote in the "Journal of Education" for April 2, 1896, as follows: "Let us leave the roses white and red with passion to wither on the dusty pages of England's history, but let us adorn Columbia's brow with the columbine, that breathes of dove-like peace."

The conviction that the columbine was the flower of flowers for Columbia's emblem came also quite independently to other persons who made no public announcement, and we shall not be surprised to learn that other original expressions of the same idea have been made in public, besides the five at present known to us. That the same idea should have come to so many at about the same time is an interesting proof of its inevitableness in view of our allegiance to Columbia. The desire to have the columbine as our national flower may be said, therefore, from its origin at this time, to have been a direct outcome of our Columbian anniversary.

The rapidity with which the columbine idea won adherents seemed to confirm the hope that the magic flower, so long sought, had at last been really found. But many another flower had seemed

for a while to be the true one, and the task of testing the columbine's qualifications had only begun. But so strong was our faith in the columbine that a few of us, its early advocates, felt impelled to undertake this task.

Our method of procedure was to bring to the attention of leading Americans, representing many diverse walks of life, the main arguments for our candidate, and to ask for their opinion regarding its fitness as viewed in the light of their special experiences. For opinions as to the columbine's horticultural possibilities we went to horticulturists; for proof of its artistic fitness, to authorities on decorative design. And so with the other aspects in which a candidate for the national flower should show itself well qualified. A few examples will show the character of the encouragement received at that time.

Surely no one could speak with higher authority regarding the horticultural merits of the Columbine than the late Francis Parkman, for three years the honored President of this society. It seems especially appropriate that I now for the first time take advantage of his permission to publish in full the following letter:

50 Chestnut Street, March 25, 1893.

Mr. Frederic LeRoy Sargent:

Dear Sir: I have read your interesting paper in the "Household" which is by far the best I have seen in relation to our national flower. Some of your suggestions are very striking and you have won me over to your belief that the columbine is the best choice we can make. I have always been partial to it on its own merits and have raised many hundred seedlings from its different varieties.

It is within the reach of the most modest purse, as it is best raised like the pansy from seed.

Some of the hybrids of *Aquilegia chrysantha*, *A. cærulea*, etc., are of remarkable variety and beauty and do not require any artificial process of fertilization, as when planted side by side they mutually fertilize themselves.

For my part, in spite of one or two brilliant exceptions, I think that the American long-spurred varieties are by far the best of the genus.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) F. Parkman.

Other communications received, and statements in seed catalogues, showed that the columbine idea was being welcomed likewise by professional horticulturists. One of the most significant instances of this practical approval came from Mr. Jacob W. Manning, who took a prominent part in the planting of the grounds at the Columbian Exposition. This gentleman having expressed himself as thoroughly in favor of the columbine for the national flower, we were moved early in 1893 at the instance of Mr. R. T. Jackson to suggest the desirability of making as full use as possible of this plant in the coming displays, if provision had not already been made to that end. We received the gratifying reply that this idea had been anticipated in the plans, and that the columbine would figure conspicuously among the herbaceous plants at the World's Fair.

As evidence of the esteem in which American columbines are held among foreign floriculturists we find that George Nicholson, justly recognized as one of the foremost horticulturists of the world, says in his great "Dictionary of Gardening": "Too much praise can scarcely be lavished upon this elegant genus of plants." Moreover, it is of interest to note that of those species which he especially recommends by "starring" a majority are indigenous to our country. Sir William Hooker, than whom no botanist has ever had a wider acquaintance with the flowers of the world, said of one of our Rocky Mountain species, *Aquilegia cærulea*, "In my opinion it is not only the queen of columbines, but the most beautiful of all herbaceous plants."

In matters botanical we have depended mainly upon statements which have come from the botanists of the Harvard Herbarium. Dr. Gray's "Synoptical Flora of North America," as continued under the editorship of Dr. Robinson, recognizes thirteen species of Aquilegia indigenous in the United States. That there are just thirteen is interesting as a coincidence, in view of the thirteen stripes in our flag, commemorative of the thirteen original States. From this same work we learn that the territory throughout which these native columbines range embraces every State in the Union except perhaps those which border on the lower Mississippi. This remarkably wide distribution is indeed almost without parallel among our native plants, if we except certain weeds.

Figures 1–3 will serve to recall the main types of general form assumed by our native columbines. Figure 1 shows the general

form in such species as *Aquilegia brevistyla* and *A. saximontana*, both of the Rocky Mountains, and so closely similar to the common columbine of the gardens (*Aquilegia vulgaris*) that when first discovered they were deemed by botanists to be merely varieties of that Old World species. Dr. Gray recognizes five American species of this type; and the latest works inform us that the *A. vulgaris* itself is now frequently found growing wild in the Eastern and Middle States.

Fig. 1. — Side view of Rocky Mountain Columbine and a single petal detached.

It was to this short-spurred type that the names Columbine and Aquilegia were originally applied. The latest dictionaries confirm the view that columbine comes from the Latin *columba*, dove, and was given to the flower because of its resemblance to a group of doves. The same authorities state that Aquilegia is from the Latin *aquila*, an eagle, most probably because when the flower is reversed the curved nectaries suggest the five talons of an eagle's claw.

Of straight-spurred forms we have seven species, as follows: the small, red-flowered *Aquilegia Canadensis*, which is the one most familiar in this region; two very similar to this in the far West; another, *Aquilegia cærulea*, with blue, lilac, or white flowers, often three inches broad and with spurs two inches long; and three, including *Aquilegia chrysantha* and *A. longissima*, with golden or pale yellow flowers, having nectaries like horns of plenty, rang-

Fig. 2. — Front view of Rocky Mountain Columbine.

ing from one to six inches long. The flowers of all our species present in front view the outline of a beautiful five-rayed star, immediately suggestive of the stars of our star-spangled banner. The time of flowering for the whole country is given as extending through the spring and early summer. Thus, as will be seen, columbines are available on our only national holiday, namely, the Fourth of July, which is celebrated in every State; and are at their very best on Memorial Day, when we have most use for a national flower.

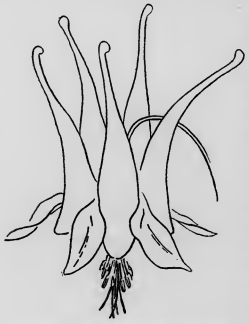

Fig. 3. — A Western American Columbine.

It was felt that from the point of view of decorative design the columbine must possess great advantages, from the fact that its national associations were expressed not only in its name, but in the form and colors assumed by the various parts. Accordingly, this aspect of the flower was brought to the attention of professional designers, and search was made for actual examples of its use in decoration. Only a few of the most interesting results can here be given. Mr. C. Howard Walker, lecturer on Architecture in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and on the History of Ornament in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wrote us as follows: "The columbine is the only one of the competitive flowers which is symbolic and can be used decoratively in all its parts. I wish that the public could appreciate the advantage of the choice of a flower which frankly shows its arrangement upon a geometric scheme, and of which the parts are sufficiently simple to be clearly defined, and which also is to be found in more than one color."

We were interested in having our attention called to the fact that John Ruskin in his "Elements of Drawing" chose the leaf of the columbine as an especially happy illustration of the organic beauty

which is attained through a well-ordered subordination of parts. His drawing of the plan of the leaf is significant also as showing that the terminal segment is composed typically of thirteen lobes. Thus we see that the leaf as a whole, with its many leaflets of many forms harmoniously related, would remind us of our motto, "*E pluribus unum*," while the terminal group, the leader of them all, would suggest by its subdivision the thirteen original States

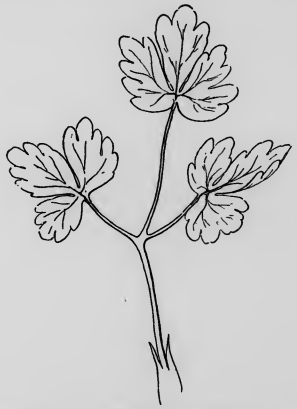

Fig. 4. — Leaf of Eastern American Columbine.

whose preëminence in the Union we symbolize by the thirteen stripes of our flag. See Fig. 4, Leaf of Eastern American Columbine.

An examination of designs taken from illuminated manuscripts showed us that both the leaf and the flower of the columbine have long been favorite motives with designers. In the decorative work of William Morris, that prince of modern designers, we have found repeated examples of the columbine figuring as a leading element. American designers are just beginning to realize what

a treasure of decorative possibilities they have in the American forms of this flower.

American poets we found had long shown a loving appreciation of its charms. It may be safely said that no other of our native flowers has received such tender tributes of affection from so many of our foremost poets. Sometime we hope it may be possible to publish the considerable collection which has already been made. A few short examples must here suffice. Ralph Waldo Emerson says:

"A woodland walk,
A quest of river grapes, a mocking thrush,
A wild rose or rock-loving columbine
Salve my worst wounds."

In these verses of Elaine Goodale see how vividly its wild grace has been felt:

"Skirting the rocks at the forest edge
With a running flame from ledge to ledge,
Or swaying deeper in shadowy glooms,
A smoldering fire in her dusky blooms;
Bronzed and molded by wind and sun,
Maddening, gladdening every one
With gypsy beauty full and fine,—
A health to the crimson columbine!"

No one of our poets has ever helped us more fully to feel the quickening spirit of nature than Jones Very. By many of us his utterances have been treasured as among the choicest outcomes of New England culture. It becomes, therefore, of especial significance that of his collected poems five should be on the columbine. From this wealth we must make a small selection. First, as showing something of the range of thought which this flower suggests, let me quote from his sonnet written about twenty years ago, "On some Blue and Golden Columbines from Pike's Peak, Colorado":

"O new-born State, what lovely flowers are thine!
Differing in color, but in form the same,
From mountain heights has come thy columbine,
Which shares with ours in beauty and in name.

"Our youngest State may grander scenes disclose,
Far loftier mountains, parks and vales more fair;
Yet where the columbine on hillside grows,
Strange though the scene, one heritage we share."

Finally, in "The Return of the Columbine," he speaks thus of the form familiar to him from childhood around his native home in Salem:

"In every crevice thou findest a place
With beauty the rocks to adorn;
The dark, craggy hillside thou lovest to grace
With bright hues like the colors of morn.
And the children come o'er the hills to roam,
And gather in bunches thy flowèrs;
Sweetest tokens they are, in many a home,
Of their walks, and the glad summer hours.

"Oh, would that the beauty so lavish and free,
And that doth with each season return,
We might with the glad heart of childhood see,
And the lesson it brings for us learn!"

These lines I have quoted especially to recall to your minds the peculiar affection which American children have for columbines. It is preëminently the children's flower, as other poets have told, and as I feel sure the experience of all of us will testify. We have had men and women from every section of the country tell us that there is no other plant which has such power as the columbine to call up the happiest times of their childhood.

These assurances confirmed our belief that at last we had found the magic flower which grows by the road to the fountain of Eternal Youth, wherein is mirrored our nation's true ideal. The columbine had shown its power to make the heart feel young. If our country's name and its mission of peace, if the hallowed symbols on our flag and coat of arms, if an example of dauntless freedom beckoning from the heights of highest achievement, can move us, then will the columbine yield the inspiration which we need. By all these tokens it is Columbia's flower. The road along which it would lead us passes through the bewildering woods where wanderers are lost; yet, by the flower's guidance, we should climb up the rugged sides of the everlasting hills, until, high above obscuring forms, we stand erect on freedom's summit, and feel the continent at our feet. There we should find the columbine, our pioneer, expanding its dove-like wings above the eagle's nest.

Such was the faith, which time only strengthens, in those who founded the Columbine Association. We were a small company,

yet believed that success would be given to our feeble efforts, where so many others had failed. We believed this because we no longer could doubt that an important message had come to us to proclaim, and by our love of country and our country's fairest flowers we were bidden to say it forth as best we might.

In the autumn of 1895 a preliminary organization was effected, and by the following spring the Columbine Association was fully established. Since then its affairs have been managed by a governing board consisting of three officers and a council of twenty-one members. In this council are men and women especially competent to advise in the various artistic, literary, horticultural, botanical, educational, and other questions touching our special work. Among these persons are several members of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. Although the Columbine Association came before the public less than three years ago it has already about three thousand members. These represent nearly every State in the Union. The fact of this rapid increase will, it is thought, lend interest to a brief statement of our plan of work.

Our principal publication is a leaflet stating concisely our arguments and methods. Copies of this, each accompanied by a membership application blank, have been widely circulated by the Association, at a price fixed so as just to cover cost.

Our constitution provides that "The object of the Association shall be to bring about the official adoption of the columbine as the national flower of the United States. To this end, the Association shall undertake to circulate as widely as possible information regarding the unique qualifications of the columbine for Columbia's floral emblem, and in other ways to arouse and direct the interest of our fellow-Americans in this important matter. As soon as the membership shall have become sufficiently extensive to warrant such a step Congress shall be memorialized, and a petition be presented which shall urge the formal recognition of the columbine as an emblem of the Nation."

It is further provided that "membership in the Association shall be open to all, and all shall be welcome," and that "an initiation fee of ten cents shall be required." This small fee barely covers the actual cost of the printed matter sent to the member, which includes two copies of the leaflet, each with its application blank, in order that the member may begin at once to secure new

members. Up to this time the profits have been insufficient to permit any free distribution of the Association's publications. No one concerned in managing the affairs of the Association receives any remuneration for his services. All money coming into the treasury is expended entirely for the benefit of the cause.

The most effective means of spreading the glad tidings of the columbine's possibilities has been simply the passing on of the message from one person to another; from this one to a third, and so on and on. But much help has also come in other ways. Various lecturers in different parts of the country have made it their theme. Patriotic and literary societies have chosen it as a subject of discussion. Not a few of the leading newspapers and magazines all over the country have given their approval and the help of their columns to our candidate and our work, although these same papers had seemed to be unable to take seriously the previous efforts towards securing a national flower.

The quarterly known as "Poet-Lore," the leading magazine of its class in the country, has adopted for its cover a columbine design.

The managers of several charitable fairs have found that a "Columbine Booth" proved a most remunerative novelty. At one of the great fairs given in Boston last winter arrangements were made not only for a Columbine Booth presided over by Miss Columbia, but for a representation of the golden-rod and the Indian corn at other tables. At each the visitors were invited to vote for the flower of their choice, at five cents a vote. At the close of the fair it was announced that the Columbine had received far more votes than the other candidates.

Some of the very best work has been done in the schools. Since nothing can show so well the inspiring power of the columbine idea as its possibilities in the hands of teachers I wish especially to call your attention to a few examples of what they have accomplished. Miss Ida Thayer Weeks, of the Tileston Grammar School, at Mattapan, writes as follows: "In all my experience I do not remember the children so absorbed in anything as they were in this. I talked with them a bit first as to a national flower, what it was, why we should have one, the flowers of other nations, etc., and then I read the leaflet, stopping all along to explain or discuss. The greatest proof, however, which I can give of their interest lies in the fact that when I suggested (in fear lest I should dampen

their enthusiasm) that each should write a composition on the subject, not one face fell. Any teacher will understand what I mean, I feel sure. Each has illustrated his writing with pen and ink sketches, but, best of all, each has designed and painted a suitable cover for it. Crude art it is, but done with a most loving spirit." The children's columbine designs, accompanying the letter from which I have just quoted, represented the work of all the class.

To those who are familiar with children's attempts at decorative work it has been a matter of surprise, in looking at this series, that so much individuality and variety are shown. The usually numerous examples of copying one from another are looked for almost in vain. While, of course, the same elements are used by all, they are managed in strikingly different ways. We cannot account for this except by supposing that the various forms of the flower so appealed to these children, and so invited them, that each felt at once something of the joy of independent invention, and had no need to imitate. From a flower with which unskilled children can do so much we may fairly expect a far more interesting treatment at the hands of professional designers than they have shown themselves capable of giving to the other flowers which have been advocated.

Indeed, the columbine has already formed the subject of some admirable designs besides the ones to which we have already referred. One of the most attractive of recent wall papers is composed of bunches of columbines. Many will also remember the very popular Columbine Calendar which Messrs. L. Prang & Co. produced for 1897. This proved to be so much of a success that a more elaborate one is in preparation for next year. It should be noticed in passing that with these professional designs, even when most conventionalized or lacking in color, it has not been considered necessary to affix a label.

Another way in which the columbine idea has been of help in the schools is by affording a leading feature of the school exhibitions. At the Tileston School the graduating class already mentioned presented as the principal exercise on the programme an animated discussion of the National Flower question, which had been prepared in dialogue form by their teacher. The published reports show that this feature made the occasion one of unusual interest. For the benefit of other teachers this discussion was published in

the "Journal of Education" for March 25, 1897. We have heard, also, of its successful use in other schools; notably, in the Pierce Grammar School in Brookline, at the graduating exercises last June. Added interest was gained by having the other numbers on the programme chosen with reference to the general subject, namely, "National Emblems correlated with History, Literature, Music, Drawing, Latin, and French."

This work in the schools we feel to be of especial importance, since the main purpose of the Columbine Association is an educational one. But, as we have already seen, there are plenty of men and women not yet too old to welcome the message we have to declare, if once they might realize its true meaning. The chief hindrance to many who would otherwise be friendly to our cause is that they do not see clearly just what sort of a plant would fully satisfy their desire for a national flower. We were much helped in our effort to reach these people by the opportunities offered at the National Flower Convention, held at Asheville, N.C., Oct. 21–23, 1896. This convention, called to recommend a national flower for adoption by Congress, was composed of delegates from various States of the Union, chosen by their respective governors, at the request of Governor Carr, of North Carolina. The two delegates and the two alternates from Massachusetts were, through the kind offices of the Secretary of this Society, selected from the governing board of the Columbine Association, and included its President and its Secretary and two members of its council. At the convention the President of the Columbine Association was elected to preside. To the Secretary of the convention, Mr. Edwin A. Taylor, belongs the credit of the original idea of thus bringing together officially accredited representatives of the different States, and to his self-sacrificing and untiring energy was due the final accomplishment of an undertaking unique in the history of our country. Delegates representing a majority of the Eastern and Middle States were present, and a few from the South and West, but it was found impossible at that time to secure the attendance of those from the more distant States. This was largely owing to unfortunate circumstances attending the presidential campaign. Thus the absence of many of the governors on campaign business made it impossible for them to give due attention to the appointment of delegates, and, indeed, a matter affecting so little the great political questions of the

hour would naturally give place to more pressing concerns. But, in spite of the fact that a majority of the States were not represented, the deliberations of the convention advanced the national flower movement in important ways. The main result is set forth in the following official letter:

"His Excellency Elias Carr, *Governor of North Carolina:*

"Sir: We, the undersigned, have been appointed a committee by the National Flower Convention, assembled by your invitation in the city of Asheville, the 21st–23d of October, 1896, to apprise you of the results of their deliberations.

"In regard to the main object of their assembly, viz., to decide upon a flower to be recommended in a memorial to the National Congress for adoption as our national floral emblem, they have concluded, after careful consideration, that in view of the inadequate representation of the different sections of the country it is inexpedient to make any recommendation at this time.

"In the way, however, of contributing to the decision of the matter sometime in the near future they have thought it not improper to present herewith a copy of the resolution adopted by them at their first business session for their own guidance in the selection of a proper floral emblem, viz.:

"'*Resolved*, That a plant to serve properly the purposes of a national flower should meet the following conditions:

"'1. It should be a native of the United States, and should grow wild over the greater part of its area.

"'2. It should bloom on one or more of our national holidays.

"'3. It should be capable of easy cultivation in any garden.

"'4. It should not be a weed, or in any way offensive, or harmful to health.

"'5. It should bear what in the popular sense is called a flower, and should not be merely a foliage plant or one chiefly valued for its fruit.

"'6. It should lend itself readily to floral decoration by variety and purity of color and distinctiveness of form.

"'7. The features characteristic of its form should combine such simplicity and gracefulness that, when used conventionally in decorative design, the flower may be readily recognized independently of its color.

"'8. It should be a flower which has never been used by any other people as their floral emblem, and not resemble such a flower in general form.

"'9. It should possess, if possible, patriotic associations plainly connecting it with the best for which our country stands among the nations of the world.'

"While the convention deemed it inexpedient to make any recommendation of a special flower at this time it was evidently the sense of a majority of the delegates present, as shown by an informal vote, that the Columbine, or Aquilegia (sometimes known as Wild Honeysuckle) is the only flower which meets the requirements set forth in the above resolution.

"We have the honor to be,
"Very respectfully yours,

(Signed) "Frederick LeRoy Sargent (Massachusetts),
"W. N. Geddes (Pennsylvania),
"C. F. Currie (New Jersey),
"L. Chaille Jamison (New Orleans),
"Henry Holzapfel, Jr. (Maryland)."

In judging what the convention accomplished it should be borne in mind that this was the first attempt ever made formally to submit the question of a national flower to a deliberative body of representative men and women officially chosen for the purpose. The first and most important step toward a satisfactory solution was an agreement as to the qualifications which should decide the fitness of a flower to be our national emblem. The great need was a clear expression of fundamental principles upon which future discussion might profitably proceed. So fully was this need met by the resolution quoted above that we have yet to hear of any one who calls in question the entire justice of its provision. The convention, in refusing under the circumstances to go further than this and try to hasten the final decision by a recommendation to Congress, was influenced solely by the consideration that the whole country would not be fairly represented by their votes, and that therefore the true progress of the national flower movement would by such action be more retarded than advanced.

It is announced in a recent Asheville paper that arrangements are making for a second National Flower Congress, to be called by President McKinley at Washington, D.C. We await with interest further details from official sources.

As a further outcome of the Asheville Convention there has recently been started by Mr. Edwin A. Taylor an independent society known as the National Flower Council. Its headquarters are at Asheville, N.C. Some of its forms of procedure are closely similar to those which have proved so successful in the Columbine Association. A fundamental difference is in the fact that the National Flower Council claims no special interest in any one flower.

The Columbine Association has been scarcely less fortunate in the opponents it has aroused than in the friends who have rallied to the cause. There is no better test of the strength of an idea than its power to meet gainfully opposing ideas. When, as often has happened, opponents of the Columbine Association have been converted into friends their applications for membership have been none the less welcome. At the risk, therefore, of encroaching on the time allowed for after-discussion of the lecture I trust I may be permitted to state the substance of the worst objections which the advocates of the columbine have encountered. If there are present any of our friendly opponents, perhaps they may be introduced to some aspects of the matter which had not occurred to them; and if in the short time remaining at my disposal I shall be unable to answer to their satisfaction all the objections which have occurred to them I trust that opportunity will be afforded for considering their views more at length.

To facilitate our quest for truth let us imagine an attorney for the remonstrants, who shall have been entrusted with all the correspondence and newspaper clippings belonging to the association, and shall have been otherwise empowered to find out all the adverse criticisms which have come to our ears. We promise that he shall be no man of straw, but shall quote the most damaging evidence he can find.

He begins: A prominent horticulturist of this State expresses the feeling of not a few thoughtful persons when he says that to him "a floral emblem seems superfluous and not a thing to legislate into existence."

We reply: As regards the importance of our having a suitable national flower this present meeting is proof that the leading horticulturists of Massachusetts now hold an entirely different view from that expressed by the gentleman quoted. Furthermore, it shows that by inviting to this lecture other thoughtful people of the community it gives them credit for believing that some importance is to be attached to a matter which touches the public sentiment of this and of future generations, and must affect the opinion which foreign nations are forming of the good taste of our people. Perhaps the gentleman himself has now changed his mind. If he admits that we have reason to be glad and thankful for the beauty and significance of our flag and coat of arms, which make them admired throughout the world, then he stands committed to the belief that future generations would be grateful to the people of today for the adoption of a floral emblem which arouses the same inspiring sentiments by the language of living beauty — a symbol of symbols, not made with hands. He will not then deem that a superfluous thing which permits our writers, artists, teachers, and our people everywhere, to remind us of our country's highest ideals in an endless variety of beautiful ways not possible by our present heraldic means. If the gentleman had lived in the early days of our country, would he have advised Congress not to legislate into existence such a thing as a flag and a coat of arms?

Our objector continues: What you ask regarding our flag and coat of arms receives an answer much to the point in an opinion expressed by a governor of one of the New England States. The American eagle and the stars and stripes for which he gallantly fought afford all the emblems he wants for patriotic purposes, and he is jealous of anything that might stand as a rival to "Old Glory" and "The Bird of Freedom." A flag is a military necessity; a coat of arms a requisite of government; a national flower is neither. As to the use of such an emblem on postage stamps and the like he prefers to have, as now, the heads of Franklin, Washington, or other great Americans, rather than any floral design.

We reply: The governor misses our intention by supposing that we expect the national flower to compete in any way with our other cherished emblems. This could never happen with us any more than it could with other nations having national flowers. The rose of England does not join in the fight of the lion and unicorn for the crown. The rose with the shamrock and the thistle

modestly offsets the grimness of this animal belligerency by touches of significant beauty. Witness the use of these flowers on the jubilee stamps of Great Britain. In this interesting series of postal designs the main feature of all is, of course, very properly a portrait of the queen, while the surrounding ornamentation is much enriched by the introduction of conventional representations of one or more of the flowers mentioned. The designs of our present postage stamps would lose nothing by the addition of the columbine as a subordinate element, and they would gain both in beauty and significance. If our flag is a necessity of war the columbine as an emblem is a necessity of peace. Neither can truly be said to be entirely indispensable, but both are invaluable as means of inspiring effort to patriotic achievement. Each is fitted to serve its special purpose better than anything else possibly could. We need the columbine for our emblem of peace. Nothing else can so fitly express Columbia's mission as the prophetess of peace, the peacemaker of the nations. No other emblem can hold so persuasively before the people that Christian ideal which prompted our great warrior to say, "Let us have peace."

Again our opponent speaks: We deny that the names of your plant upon which such stress is laid have the significance which you attach to them. Columbine means column-binder, and Aquilegia, according to Dr. Gray's latest work, is from the Latin *aquilegus*, water-drawer, the derivation from *aquila* being, as he says, "an invention."

We reply: These objections might be important if true. It was a long time before we could track that "column-binder" idea. None of the great dictionaries or the special books on plant names even so much as referred to it. They were found to be unanimously of the opinion that columbine comes from *columba* (a dove), of which *columbus* is the masculine form. Finally in an old edition of Stormonth's dictionary we found that after showing how it came through the old French form, *columba*, a dove, he adds, "may be only from *column* and *bine* from Anglo-Saxon *bindan*, Icelandic *binda*, to bind, as in 'woodbine,'" and then tells us that the plant he is talking about is *Aquilegia vulgaris*. This plant is not a vine, and no one ever knew it to bind anything unless perchance it be the hearts of those who love it. All the writers best qualified to judge of the matter evidently consider that Stormonth ought to have known better than to make such a wild self-contradictory guess. Those who have been worrying over Dr. Gray's remarks on the derivation of Aquilegia will find comfort in its correction recently published in the second fascicle of the first part of the first volume of the "Synoptical Flora." On page 463 we read: "Aquilegia. The etymology of the generic name is at best doubtful." The Columbine Association has never claimed otherwise. Our statement from the first has been simply this: "However the name may have originated, it has generally been understood by generations of those who have used it to be connected with the Latin *aquila*, an eagle." For proof of this we have the statements of innumerable writers on plants for over one hundred and fifty years. This long-established association of ideas no one can doubt. The fact that no one really knows how the name Aquilegia came to be given to the columbine is not of the slightest consequence from our point of view. We are not concerned with the unknown beginnings of the name, but with the vital association which it has come to have and can never lose.

The objector returns to the charge: What you say about these names may be true enough, but how about the specific name, *Canadensis*, which botanists have given to our Eastern columbine? Is not this name with its Canadian significance most unfortunate? We reply: On the contrary all that is unfortunate about it is that so few of our people have ever heard the plant called by that name, and that so many of those who have heard it do not know what it really means. The history of the name is briefly this: Linnæus, the "Father of Botany," gave the plant this name in 1753, borrowing it from Cornut's "Canadensium Plantarum." In those days the region called Canada, as is well known, extended from Quebec to New Orleans. The name *Canadensis* could only mean that the plant grew in this immense region, of which by far the greater part now belongs to the United States. Not a few of the other plants which received the same specific name at that time are never found in the present Canada at all. Many of us are glad to feel that our familiar wild columbine does grow in the Canada of today, for we take it as perhaps prophetic that some day when the columbine's message shall have made Columbia's sway a wider blessing the little plant will no longer be growing on an alien soil.

The anti-columbinist continues: Among the popular names and fancies which have become associated with the columbine there is

one which makes it ridiculous; it is called "folly's flower." An early American poet, William Young, speaks of "the columbine with its cap and bells for folly." Mr. Meehan quotes from Miss Twamley to the same effect, and says that even Shakespeare refers to this flower in connection with folly.

We reply: What you say may have some value as a joke, but a sense of humor must prevent any one from taking it seriously as an objection. In the first place it is not true that Shakespeare refers to this flower in connection with folly. Mr. Meehan is entirely mistaken. The two obscure writers whom you mention seem to be about the only ones whose thoughts have turned in this direction. To them, however, we have reason to be grateful as adding one more to the quaint conceits which this flower has suggested. It has been well said that we love those persons best at whom we may now and then have our little laugh. The principle applies here. This suggestion which leads us to see the cap and bells in the columbine and so make of it a little jester affords an affectionate touch no less welcome than quaint. Our beloved Lincoln, whom Lowell calls "the first American," would have been less truly so without his jokes. So in the columbine — if there was one feature lacking to make it truly representative of all that is best in the American people it was a suggestion of the characteristic American humor. This is now given us in the reminder of the cap and bells, the badge of those invaluable representatives of freedom of speech called fools, perhaps because they were generally the wisest and wittiest men of their day.

Again the opposition speaks: Many complain that our wild columbine is too frail to be useful for decoration, and some urge furthermore that to choose it for a national flower would be to encourage its extermination.

We reply: Wild flowers are very seldom as satisfactory for floral decorations as cultivated ones; hence our need of florists and horticulturists and our gratitude for their achievements. No one who has seen the magnificent exhibitions of cultivated columbines in this hall can fail to recognize them as having all the qualifications necessary for decorative purposes. Like roses they need to be carefully handled, because of the delicacy of form which is an essential condition of their exquisite loveliness. So cared for they are durable enough — more durable than many flowers more widely used — and as durable as the loveliest flowers ever can be.

If for any one who shall desire to use columbines on national holidays it shall not have been practicable to raise or to buy them the wild ones will generally be available in the vicinity, and if treated with becoming tenderness will prove a joy far more lasting than the critics would have us believe. Experience has shown that a bunch of wild columbines carefully tended will remain fresh in a vase of water for nearly a week. As to any real danger of exterminating such a plant, it is quite imaginary. For in the first place not only is the plant difficult to uproot, and in certain cases inaccessible, but the free seeding of these individuals insures a good supply of new plants. Moreover, if the columbine should once become our national flower its rights would be more jealously guarded than ever, and more efforts would be made to sow seeds wherever they would grow. It is not the least of the services which the Columbine Association is rendering to lovers of our wild flowers that it seeks to make two columbines grow where but one grew before.

Our antagonist resumes: You say that Colorado has already adopted a columbine for its State flower. Does not this preclude its use by the country at large?

We reply: Not at all. Colorado's view of the question is well shown by the fact that Governor McIntire of that State is a member of the Columbine Association, and has written us his hearty approval of our plan. If other States should wish to adopt the columbine as an emblem they would of course need to choose some other sort sufficiently distinct from the Colorado one to avoid heraldic conflict. But between the United States and any single State there could never be any such conflict. This is illustrated by the way in which the American Eagle and the Stars and Stripes of the National shield recur again and again in the arms of the various States. Instead of a conflict of emblems the result is expressive of a further bond of union of the parts within the whole.

The counsel for the remonstrants regrets that the time occupied in answering his arguments has already been so much as to prevent him from entering several other protests that he had prepared. Rather than tax your patience further, however, he is willing to rest his case on the following general objection: The advocates of the columbine contend that their candidate is not only the most suitable flower for the purpose, but that it is the only one that can answer the requirements. How can any one be sure that the vast

flora of this great country does not include some other flower than the columbine far better suited to our national needs? The great difficulty of answering such a question should make us pause, and indeed call for an indefinite postponement of judgment.

We reply: The question is fair enough, but the difficulty of answering it has been much overstated. Either of two methods will serve. The first was employed by Mr. Geddes, botanical editor of the "Standard Dictionary" and delegate from Pennsylvania to the National Flower Convention. Without prejudice he took Dr. Gray's "Manual of Botany" and went through every plant family, throwing out by a process of elimination all those plants which for obvious reasons were quite unfit for our national flower. As a result he had just one plant left, the columbine. Moreover he assured us at the convention that before this he had not heard the columbine suggested as a candidate. Any plant not included in Gray's Manual would of course be unknown throughout the most populous sections of the country, and therefore entirely hopeless as a candidate for national flower. The second method is easier. It merely requires one to remember that many persons of all classes in all parts of the country have been doing their best for ten years to have every possible candidate considered, and that especially qualified representatives met to consider deliberately the question of a national flower from every possible point of view. There is no room for the slightest doubt that these delegates as a body were well acquainted with every plant in which the general public could have any interest, and which therefore could for a moment be considered as a candidate for national honor. Of all the flowers mentioned at the convention only one — the columbine — could meet the requirements which the convention deemed indispensable in a national flower. Hence — and the conclusion is inevitable — the equal or the superior of the columbine for Columbia's emblem does not exist. Doubtless the Creator could have made a fitter flower, but, doubtless, He never did.

Before closing, let me very briefly summarize. Each of the columbine's rivals, though precluded, as we have seen, by fatal objections from serving as Columbia's emblem, nevertheless offered some most valuable qualification. Thus, as the columbine connects itself by name historically with Columbus and the Columbian Exposition, so the Mayflower, by its name, recalls the good ship of the Pilgrims. For their widespread distribution, golden-rods,

asters, and sunflowers are remarkable as well as the columbine. The golden or the purple tints of these flowers at their best match the columbine's pure yellow and purple, while the latter's near relative, the larkspur, includes among its colors the columbine's red, white, and blue. For inoffensiveness, charm, and ease of cultivation the pansy and many of the old-fashioned garden flowers have endeared themselves as much as the columbine, and for availability in decorative design it may be claimed that such flowers as the mountain laurel and the magnolia are in form hardly less exquisite and distinctive. The valuable suggestion which keeps in view our dependence upon the trees of the country would be expressed with scarcely less appropriateness by any one of them than by the columbine, their companion, which owes so much to their protecting care. So, in the matter of agricultural supremacy, corn, cotton, and tobacco, as sample products raised on American soil, suggest the same abundance which is symbolized by the columbine's horns of plenty. The columbine, however, has this great merit, that it combines within itself the highest merits of all its rivals. Accordingly it comes as the peacemaker among the flowers. The advocates of other flowers are ceasing to contend with one another and are rallying to its cause, since in the triumph of this they see the realization of more than the highest promise of their former hope. Moreover, in its role of peacemaker, and as preëminently the emblem of peace, the columbine brings the national flower movement into most opportune relations with the present peace movement of the world. In the words of President McKinley, "The citizens of the United States have the right to be proud that their country is in the van in the efforts which are being made for international arbitration." Hence, it especially becomes us to adopt such a perfect emblem of peace as the columbine would be. Not only would this emblem announce to the world the idea of Christian policy which our nation has so long maintained, but it would also, by ever directing the thoughts of our people to the responsibilities of our high mission, aid us in maintaining the right. Thus the columbine idea, born of the Columbian Exposition, — our country's greatest celebration of the victories of peace, — becomes a part of that world-wide movement which the ages shall deem the greatest glory of this glorious nineteenth century.

We of the Columbine Association, who ask you to join us in

spreading our message, offer to share with you an ever-brightening hope and a promise assured by past achievement. Our hope is that the columbine will soon win recognition as our national flower — possibly before the beginning of the new century so near at hand. Our promise is this: If you help the cause of the columbine you will be most effectively discouraging what is least worthy of the American people in the national flower movement. At the same time you will be suggesting uplifting thoughts to many of your fellow countrymen and will stir in their hearts some of the noblest and tenderest feelings. Therefore, so far as you can influence these wellsprings of national endeavor, you are helping to shape the destinies of your country and to further the welfare of the world.

No one who has studied the growth of the popular desire for a national flower during the last ten years will permit himself to ask the question, Shall we have such an emblem? The American people may be trusted to accomplish their hearts' desire. The fundamental question for all of us to decide is this: Shall our national flower be a cause of regret or shame, or shall it be as fitting and noble an emblem as the world has ever seen? We are doing our best to bring the national flower movement to an issue of which our country may be proud. We need your help. Help us!

Copies of the COLUMBINE LEAFLET, telling "Why the Columbine Should Be Our National Flower," and how to help in bringing about its adoption, may be had at two cents each (offers one cent for postage on lots less than three) by application to Mr. J. S. Pray, Secretary of the Columbine Association, P. O. Box 2774, Boston, Mass. With each leaflet is an application card, and a return envelope addressed to the secretary.

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